No further requirement of rules is foreseen at present.

Agenda for the Eastern Zonal Council

1917. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) what was the main agenda for the 17th meeting of the Eastern Zonal Council held at Patna in September, 1985 ;

(b) how many items were taken up and discussed ; and

(c) what was the total time devoted for discussion on the agenda?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATES (SHRI P. A. SANGMA) : (a) The agenda for the meeting included items concerning irrigation and power, mining, industry, agriculture, roads, forests, environment health, and labour etc, apart from a review of implementation of the recommendations made by the Council earlier.

(b) 21 items out of 24 were taken up and discussed.

(c) The meeting continued for about 3-1/2 hours.

Request of Commonwealth Countries to halt Arms Race

1918. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is fact that the Commonwealth leaders had urged the US and the Soviet Union to halt arms race ;

(b) whether any joint appeal by the Commonwealth leaders was forwarded to both the countries ;

(c) whether the US has turned down the proposal ; and

(d) what was been the reaction of the Soviet Union in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI B. R. BHAGAT) : (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The Commonwealth leaders urged upon the United States and the Soviet Union to achieve their declared objectives of preventing an arms race in space and terminating it on earth. The leaders also appealed to the U.S. and the Soviet Union to begin without delay the process of reversing the nuclear arms race through significant measures of nuclear disarmament.

(c) and (d) The reactions of the Soviet Union and the United States are still awaited.

Development of Eastern Zone

1919. SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that in September, 1983 a meeting of the Eastern Zonal Council was held and some particular problems of development of the Eastern Zone were placed by the member States ;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken by Government to sort out those problems ;

(d) the results achieved ; and

(e) if no measures to sort out these problems have been taken so far what are reasons thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATES (SHRI P. A. SANGMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The problems relating to the development of mining, rail and road transport, power irrigation

forests and tourism etc, were discussed and the decisions taken at its earlier meeting held in April 1981 were reviewed at the meeting of the Council held in September, 1983.

(c) to (e) The issue were reviewed and examined at subsequent meetings of the Standing Committee in the Council. The recommendations made by the Council and the Standing Committee were referred to the Planning Commission, concerned Central Ministries and the State Government for appropriate action.

Earthquake in India

1920. SHRIMATI KRISHNA KAUL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item which appeared in the *Indian Express* of the 27th October, 1985 under the caption "Quakes will hit India, says seismologist " ;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ; and

(c) what remedial measures Government propose to take in thi regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Earthquakes are a phenomena which have been taking place in India from times immemorial. Their recurrence cannot be denied or predicted. The Himalaya and the Northeastern region are part of a world wide zone of earthquakes. The currently held geological views are that these earthquakes are caused by the Northeastward movement of the Indian land mass which is apparently slipping slowly beneath Eurasian land mass. This interaction coupled with some geological processes taking place at great depths, may cause earthquakes in the foot hill region of the Himalayas, Indo-Gangetic plains interior of the Himalaya, Shillong Plateau and the Northeastern region.

Indeed, a number of devastating earthquakes have occurred in North India during the last 100 years such as Shillong (1897) Kangra (1905) Quetta (1931 & 1934) Bihar (1935) and Assam (1950) Earthquakes of moderate magnitude have occurred in several other parts of the country such as at Koyna (1967). The attached list gives a few more as samples of earthquakes indicating their distribution in time and space. *(See below)*.

The Government is aware of whatever is known about the causes of earthquakes. Using observational network of seismic and other instruments through out the country, various codes have been devised for making earthquakes-resistant large civil engineering structures, and buildings in consultation with Civil Engineers Geologists, Seismologists and Indian Standard Institution. These codes are available for use and continuous efforts are made to improve upon these codes for better earthquake resistant designs through R&D efforts.

(c) Regarding advice and caution, the people should take into consideration specified codes while planning their buildings in earthquakes-prone areas, particularly in the North and Northeast India.

In Addition to taking note of the evolved codes for new buildings and structures, there has to be a conscious effort to create awareness about earthquakes and use of available measures to mitigate the likely losses to property and life. The Government has taken necessary steps like promoting seminars and symposia, for creating awareness and accelerating R&D efforts.